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Three Vows  
and other Poemz

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# T H R E E V O W S

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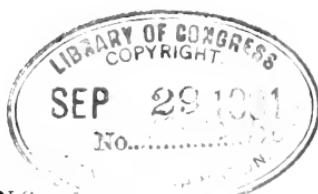
WILLIAM BATCHELDER GREENE

“Oh, that mine enemy would write a book!”

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## P R E F A C E.

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In "Three Vows" I have endeavored to sustain throughout an unbroken thread of narrative, feeling convinced that any break, or deviation from the straight road leading to the climax of the plot, runs the risk of wearying the reader, or in some way deteriorating from what general interest may be felt in a work of this kind.

In following the example of certain Scandinavian writers, I have ventured in "Satan of the Sea" more than once to change the metre to suit the mood of some passages. And I would beg indulgence for what might seem at first an unduly rough and almost uncouth manner of treatment throughout the whole piece. But, I trust, after due perusal, some of my readers may agree with me in believing that it is the only true and adequate mode of dealing with the subject and circumstances of the plot.

I do not feel called upon here to say much as regards the very limited collection of shorter poems at the end of the book, as they have all appeared in print before, either on this or the other side of the Atlantic. My only reason for reproducing them in this form is to place them collectively.



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## THREE VOWS.

### PART I.

Twelve months—'twas long, and yet to each  
It scarcely seemed more than a joyous day  
Spent in the sunshine of each other's love.  
And as this love was all their inmost life,  
It was a treasure far too sacred  
To be ever loudly on the air ; 'twas seldom  
Uttered forth in open words. The touch, the long  
And earnest gaze, the whisper intimate,  
With, now and then, a half-conceded sigh,  
Told all the oft-repeated tale. There was  
A lute that hung upon the pictured wall, and  
Every day they sought with eager hand  
To strike some chord in unison  
With their glad hearts. And oft when Martin's  
song

Had ceased, quick Isabel would snatch  
The lute, as if she thought to catch  
Some lingering remnant of his rhapsody  
Still clinging to the trembling strings,  
Which she might draw with nimble touch  
From out the ringing instrument,  
Unto her soul's delight.

Old Allenday,

Her father and a white-haired widower,  
Scarce fairly knew his daughter's mind.  
'Twas said that Martin once her life had saved,  
In the back vista of past years ;  
'Twas meet they should be friends—he owed him  
much—  
And Martin ever was a welcome guest.  
There were two suitors for the hand  
Of Isabel, abiding each his time :  
Carnac, and the good Doctor Honoré.  
The first, an Indian officer, rich, handsome  
And a lord, seemed somewhat worldly  
In the old man's eyes ; too minikin

Of heart, and prone to flatteries ;  
Too scornful of the earth on which he trod,  
To make his child a gladsome bride.  
But Doctor Honoré was true, well proven  
In all solid worth and staid sagacity,  
A man of fame and passing wealth ; yet now  
Perchance a trifle over-wrought in years  
To mate with child so young as Isabel,  
To match his locks of gray against her raven curls.  
“ Oh yes—I love the doctor well,”  
The old man dreamily would sigh,  
Amid a circle of enduring friends,  
At night, when all the doors were closed,  
As he watched dance the flame upon the hearth,  
That came and went, and rose and fell  
Like his own changeful thoughts, until  
His drowsy guests would softly rise and go.

Oft he had seen the face of Martin  
In the fire-light—but quick dismissed the thought ;  
He'd ne'er consent to such a hazard match !  
A young lieutenant lately ordered

With his ship to cruise in dang'rous seas ; to be  
Pent up from Isabel within a roving  
Prison-house, while she was left to pine,  
And count the heavy days by her soft  
Beauty's waste, as roses mew their tinted leaves.  
It were a sorry lot for any wife,  
Let 'lone a child so young and delicate.

But Martin, like a bark that finds but toil  
And tossing on the outer reefs, and sees  
The fair arms open of a halcyon port  
Inviting him to come and nestle there,  
For the first time laid his flushed cheek  
On Isabel's white neck. Once there, he breathed  
But two or three quick, broken words ;  
While a soft light filled her bright eyes,  
As she bent low, and answered : "Yes."  
So, all was changed ; the veil was torn aside ;  
And it seemed now as if they could not  
Speak enough of love. With words they sought  
To picture out what all their love-lorne sighs  
And tell-tale eyes had so well marked

Before ; forgetful of all else, in love's  
Sweet selfishness.

One twilight eve they sat  
Amid the flowers on the garden's bank,  
And Isabel's light fingers played  
With the gay purfle of her silk embroidery ;  
And Martin fixed his earnest eyes  
On Isabel—a look which sudden brake  
Into a beam of joy, when marking there  
A glow of happiness pervading all  
Her countenance. “ So tell me now, sweet Isabel,  
Hast thou e'er loved before ? ” She glanced at him  
In great surprise. “ I love ? ” she said,  
With gentle gravity ; “ My father and my  
Mother I have loved, not any else. But thou,  
Now tell me true, hast thou not loved before ? ”  
“ Yes, once I thought I loved ; 'tis now long past ;  
She was most wondrous beautiful—and yet,  
'Twas like an early morning dream  
That is dispelled by light of healthful day.  
She loved not me alone, I found, and so

I left her free to be another's choice."

" But, dearest Martin, could'st thou fly  
Her memory as readily as thou could'st  
Leave her side ?" " When I knew all, unto my  
mind

Her vision seemed bereft of soul, and then  
Reality despoiled the bright illusion  
Of its former charm. Now, I repeat,  
I love thee, Isabel ; and all  
Those nodding flowers round us here  
Do bear me witness in the same.

But thou, my Isabel, must let  
Lord Carnac see that he no more must hope."

" 'Twas, Martin, his own heart that gave him hope,  
If hope it was that made his manner bold ;  
I cannot bear his platitudes,  
His airy talk of India and the spangled  
Regiment his showy swagger so adorns."

" And, bonny Isabel, there's Honoré—  
'Twill be a cruel blow for him !" " Oh, Martin,  
Laugh not so. We both have loved to listen  
To his sage discourse ; he seems so good,

So learned and so wise. And often  
He's been kind to me." "Then thou dost pity  
him?"

"Not so much pity—as love thee!  
But respite this, and let us walk."  
And Martin pressed her lips, and both arose  
And passed on, hand in hand, along the path.

They had not heard a quick receding step,  
Whose haste seemed almost tremulous,  
As some one gently shut the garden gate.  
'Twas Doctor Honoré,—and now he stopped  
And slowly wiped the cold drops from his brow;  
Then striding on, he reached his cottage door,  
Where clustered thick the emerald vines.  
He entered in, his hat still on his head,  
Then turned, and closed the study door.

He had heard nothing, but seen all!  
And leaning on a table that was near,  
He buried deep his face in both his hands,  
And there remained subdued in grief.

“ The look she gave, but one sure meaning had—  
And oh, the kiss—the kiss—that drove me mad !  
Unhappy man that now I am, I loved her,  
Angel that she is—oh, Isabel !  
I who, absorbed in study, work and books, had  
Said : ‘ I have no time for love ; love’s not for me ;  
‘Tis but a waste illusion, fit for youth,  
For idleness.’ How bitter comes this taunt !  
I, at my age—and Isabel, a girl  
Of twenty odd, yet scarcely fairly weaned from  
School,—a child, that almost might my daughter be.  
‘Twould be the rosy future coupled with the halting  
Past. Still not so strange to worldly eyes,  
The lapse of time hath so oft been adjusted  
On the altar step, by shameless parents,  
For the price of gold ; but I have not the gold,  
Nor hath friend Allenday the shame !  
That I have vaguely dreamt of paradise  
Like this, doth make me laugh when I do ponder  
On ’t. What with my hermit character,  
My youthless, book-worm life, that hath explored  
The sunless realms of half-imprisoned lore,

I knew not that my heart must beat  
To call existence to its full account.  
And all these pondered tomes of cold  
Philosophy, whose master I had vainly  
Deemed myself, cry out, like starving beggars,  
On God's wondrous gift of woman's love !  
Yes, blessed angel Isabel, I knew not  
Till this day I loved thee thus, thou beauteous one.  
My heart has played the truant with my head ;  
My love but wakes to find itself bereft."  
He rose, and paced the room, repeating all  
The while : " And at my age—yes, at my age—  
How strange I ne'er had loved before."  
But now he stops, his breath comes fast,  
As if for some unuttered cause he struggled  
With himself. " My star, my cherished Isabel—  
Not mine, alas ! I had forgot to-day—  
And oh, my aching heart, her star must  
Vanish now, that long hath graced with such  
Sweet promises love's hopeful firmament !  
Gone like a meteor's flash, too bright to last,  
Whose very lustre doth foretell its doom.

When hope expires in the human breast,  
How darker than all other pomps  
Of death comes the o'erwhelming night !  
When peasants see a shooting-star, some whisper :  
‘ ‘Tis a soul set free ; God guide that soul aright.’  
And all devoutly cross themselves.  
And I say : ‘ God bless thee, bright Isabel ! ’ ”

The little village rang with the  
Eventful news. The gossips met along  
The quaint and narrow street, but could  
Not all agree. Some shook their heads :—  
“ She wed a sailor—ah, poor thing !  
I’d prayed for her a better fate.  
A man that goes with ev’ry wind,  
And comes not home with the tide ;  
In troth, it is a sorry lot  
To be the widow of a living thing.”

But now, all blithesome were the happy pair ;  
Days passed in the enchanted walks of love ;  
The sun-tipped flowers nodded as they came,

Kissed by the soft exultant breeze, on whose  
Uplifted wings the transient birds seemed full  
Of caroled promises for the fast ripening time  
That pointed to the nuptial day.

At last, the marriage eve had come ;  
The pair, impatient of the hours  
That yet loitered ere the night, stole out  
Into the broadcast wood ; they walked on  
Starry-rooted moss, beneath the tow'ring trees,  
That from their green-lit upper boughs seemed  
gazing  
Solemnly below—their tall trunks, painted  
With a fallow shade, outstanding from  
The inner gloom of sylvan night.  
And soft the sacred-seeming stillness stole  
Down in the open soul of the young bride.  
“ And is not this,” said Isabel,  
“ Like some cathedral nave, some holy place  
Wherein to worship God ? ” And both passed on  
In reverie, yet ever and anon  
Exchanging a soft glance of undiminished

Love, until the prone-edge of the wood was  
reached,

Where rose a narrow path ascending to  
A hillet's crest, where stood a shrine,  
A little temple of white stone,  
Far-back embedded in the heath against  
The fair blue sky, like some snow cloud that, fal-  
len,

Sleeps beneath the watchful firmament.

It had bat three blank outer walls, crowned by  
The lichenèd roof ; the fourth partition  
Was an iron gate, that barred the altar steps.  
Above the altar, stretched along, was  
Rudely limned the image of our Lord, crowned  
o'er

With thorns, and bearing on His neck His peo-  
ple's

Cross, while at His bleeding feet was writ :

“ He, who would come and be with Me,  
Must take his cross and follow Me.”

“ This is a sweet appeal to those who  
Crosses have,” said Isabel, half childishly.

"We all should follow Jesus," Martin said.

"Yes, dearest Martin, true, but those  
Who crosses have, are nearer far to Christ."

"We all have crosses, Isabel."

"Ah, call not crosses those that are not such ;  
Those are not crosses which we make and fash-  
ion

Ourselves. True crosses must be sent of God."

Here Martin answered not ; he marked  
That Isabel, now full of earnest thought,  
Was wrapped in gazing on the rough  
And time-stained effigy, that to his  
Fancy seemed to pause, like him, to hear  
Her speak again. At last she turned and said :

"Now, Martin, that we have no cross,  
Let us pray God that should it ever be  
His holy will to send us one,

We may with resignation carry it,  
Because 'tis He that sends it us—  
Thus bowing to our Master's will."

Both knelt upon the steps, and Martin  
Bent his head against the iron gate

Before the altar piece, and Isabel clasped  
Her white hands, and fixed her gaze upon  
The image of the Lord, that seemed to glow  
From out the faded colors of the wall,  
Responding to her fervent upturned eyes, while  
All around seemed burning with a subtle light.  
“O Lord, here prostrate at Thy sacred feet,  
We offer up ourselves. And should it come  
To pass, that Destiny, of which  
Thou only art the King, should load  
Us with an earthly cross, may we  
Submissive be to Thy most holy will, in  
Resignation and all meet humility.”  
“I, too, unite myself unto that prayer,”  
Said a grave voice behind the prostrate  
Boy and girl. Half startled and amazed, they  
turned ;  
And lo ! they saw the doctor standing there.

At early dusk the three returned through  
The green-golden gloom of the grave wood.  
A solemn sense had crept between

Each soul ; all three were mute, and walked  
In self-solicitude. For each, thus having  
Stopped in the full current of quick life,  
Looked down the past and up the airy future,  
Felt a mysterious crisis in self-being  
Wound about the spirit of this compact  
Sealed to mighty God—this triune orison !

In summer ease they found the good old  
Allenday there seated at his porch,  
With all the garden flowers circling 'round  
That Isabel had loved so well ;  
And there were other friends, that stood beside  
His chair ; but these were only human  
After all, and had their failings at the best.  
The old man had not been at peace  
Since Isabel had thrown her frail arms  
'Bout his wrinkled neck, to win her suit,  
Bedewing with such touching tears her prayers,  
That all aversion to her earnest wish  
Had slowly sunk into the sad reserve that  
Now sat still in silence on his brow.

A shimmer had come o'er the waters  
Of the night ; the moon was drowned in morning  
mists,  
The white stars blotted out by day ; while like  
A young awakening sprite the upstart winds  
Unloosed the dying night, and fanned the drowsy  
Sexton's cheek, that clambered up the belfry stairs  
To wake the village with a marriage peal :

Ding a-ling, along, ding-ding-dell !  
For the village all must know,  
They must know.—bells all go :  
Ding a-ling, along, ding-ding-do !  
Now the cocks have ceased to crow,  
All below, all below,  
And the farmer rubs his eyes,  
And the maiden, dreaming, sighs,  
All below,—now they go :  
Ding a-ling, along, ding-ding-do !  
And the sun from out the east,  
Shooting past the gothic arch,  
Casts the shadow of the sexton

On the wall, gaunt and tall,  
Bending low, to and fro,  
Pulling long, hard and strong,  
And they go : ding-ding-dong !  
'Tis young Martin's happy day,  
'Tis a daughter's wedding morn,  
'Tis a father's bitter-sweet,—  
Are these bells, so loud and strong,  
Are these bells, that ring so long.  
And to one they sound in sorrow,—  
One who long hath feared the morrow ;  
To one heart it is a knell ;  
Full of sadness is this bell,  
That goes lightly to and fro :  
Ding a-ling, along, ding-ding-do !  
But the merry peasant maids,  
With their blue eyes and their braids,  
Know not what this music tells—  
Gay, yet sad, mysterious bells !

The time, the day, the hour had now come,  
And Isabel's black eyes shone 'neath a radiant

Wreath of orange-white. The doctor was not there ;  
He'd made some blunt excuse to leave the place ;  
Some patient in a neigb'ring town,  
'Twas thought, had sudden claimed his services.  
But Carnac came, like some black raven,  
To the marriage feast, to smile with covered hate  
Upon th' unconscious pair. Old Allenday  
Saw but his child, in all the swaying throng  
That pressed for nearer view ; saw all possession,  
In his lonely future, slowly slip from out  
His aged, hungry arms. "She will be happy,"  
Pondered he, "she will be blest—e'en happy still  
Away from me." And then to check or to dis-  
guise

A truant tear, he turned and asked : "Where is  
Friend Honoré . . . . Gone to a consultation,  
So you say ? . . . . I think I know," he'd mut-  
ter low ;

But his poor heart forsook him when they sang  
The nuptial hymn,—'twas then he fairly wept.  
At eventide, when they and all the guests had  
Gone, the old man walked beside the garden bank,

And thought of both locked in each other's arms.  
And then he stood 'mid all the flowers  
Isabel had loved, and tended day by  
Day, now left like orphans of her patient care  
Bereft of her kind hand and gentle smile,  
That with the rain and sunshine made them thrive.  
'Twas scarce a day, and yet to him it was  
An age, that she was gone, and all things  
Seemed bereft. At last, the calm, still moon looked  
    down  
Through all the layers of the silent air,  
Above the glist'ning foliage of the trees,  
And seemed to say to father Allenday :  
“ Old man, thou art alone, thou art alone.”

Joy is fleeting, so is pain. Six months  
Had past in bliss for the fond wedded pair,  
When, at the early morning meal, was served  
A letter with a broad red seal, and as  
Poor Martin read, his brow grew dark ;  
He passed the missive unto Isabel, and  
Turned away his face. She read the words, but

Hardly caught the sense of all at first, till  
The warm tears came leaping to her eyes. And she  
Let fall the rustling paper to the ground, while  
Martin knelt beside her, at her feet, and gazed,  
With sad and stricken love, into her  
Half-drowned eyes, while her quick sobs caught up  
The choking tale ; for the dread summons now  
Had come at last, and he must go. His days were  
Numbered on the shores of love ; for if the sea  
Give up her dead, she doth reclaim  
The living to her fitful element.

The blow was struck to sever these twin hearts ;  
Now putting fate, and time, and dread surmise,  
Between them and reunion in this state.  
'Twas sad to watch poor Isabel, with  
Falt'ring fingers, store the seaman's chest  
With all most needful for so long a cruise—  
So long she scarce could picture his return ;  
Yet hope gave life, and she strove on. Oft their  
eyes  
Met, but turned aside again, for when they gazed

'Too long, the cadent tears would start afresh,  
And their hearts'-wound would bleed anew.  
And now, alas ! the day had come when  
He must go. Down to the landing both passed,  
Arm in arm, they'd had their own long bitter  
Parting in the house before, that none  
Might comment on their grief ; and now  
To see them, 'twould be scarcely dreamt they were  
Half-dead with heart-sick grief within. And as the  
Boat pushed off, there was no cry of agony.  
And Isabel turned back to watch the ship ;  
But did not see that Carnac too, was come  
Among the crowd, to watch, with prurient eye,  
Her face obliquely-turned, that peradventure  
He might trace some token of her self-hid suffering.

Returning to the tedious round  
Of life, poor Isabel found little time to  
Nurse the sorrows and the longings of a heart  
Bereaved. Her father, Allenday, was  
Sadly fallen off from health, and claiming all  
Her duty and her utmost fortitude, she

Scarcely had a waking thought that she might  
Call her own. Yet oft, in dreams, she heard  
The splash of the white waves, and saw three  
Swaying masts on a vext wilderness of sea,  
And cloud, on cloud, pursuing cloud. But only  
'Woke to gaze upon her father's face, all still  
And sunken 'gainst the snowy sheet. Her time  
Was short, and Doctor Honoré had said  
She should not watch again. At last,  
It was pronounced that Allenday had passed  
A better night—so she was taken to her bed,  
And 'rose not thence, until her hour'd come.  
And she brought forth a little girl, for all the  
World like to herself, but very delicate.  
Old Allenday had died—she knew it not—  
But as the new life came, the old one went.

Now twice the skipping earth had rolled about  
The ancient sun, and winter stood at hand  
Once more, and the sad winds flew round the  
House and shook the outer fastenings.  
And ever and anon, the pelting rain

Fell drumming on the roof, while rushed  
The noisy concourse of the water-spouts  
Upon the tired hearing of her lonely heart.  
But Isabel most dreaded the long troubled  
Nights, when the foul Tempest rose amain  
And madly seized all nature roused without,  
And from the darkness shook his wild, wet locks  
Upon her, from the window-pane. 'Twas then  
She turned, and clasped her trembling, bloodless  
hands

In prayer for Martin on the open seas.  
One howling night, all torn with wind and rain,  
'Twas in the dreaded season on that coast,  
While watching by her babe, she heard a blind,  
That long had swung upon its creaking hinge,  
Slam with an angry thump against the window-  
Sash. She started, and looked up, and thought  
she saw

Her husband's face ! And then another face—Lord  
Carnac's

Eyes peered in upon her from without, then passed  
Like lightning, and she heard a sharp, quick ring,

And all seemed dead within her, save her heart,  
That beat as if it must rush forth  
And leave her terror-rooted where she stood.  
Then came a servant with a startled mien ;  
But ere she'd spoken, Isabel, regaining  
Sudden nerve to move, with some wild horror  
In presentment, had headlong rushed without,  
And there before the open door, where streamed  
Through the black night the wind and rain,  
A dripping, muffled figure stood :—

" From Madras, hot haste, I have flashed my way,  
Nor paused till now, with my dark news.  
Thy husband's ship lies at the bottom  
Of the sea ! And now my duty is performed."  
And Carnac wrung his wet hat o'er the floor,  
But looked not up lest he should meet the stricken  
Woman's eyes. " Yes—yes ! But Martin lives ? "  
cried she ;  
Yet Carnac said not. " Read !" quoth he. The  
hand  
Was lifted for the paper he held forth,

But dropped again like a lopped bough, as if 'twas  
Sudden paralyzed. And Isabel was carried  
Silently and laid within her chamber, near  
Her babe. And Carnac turned upon his heel,  
And stalked out to the night, from whence he  
came,  
As if conspiring with the less dread  
Elements of darkness and the storm, to strike,  
With murd'rous haste, a last, black blow.

For months

She lay, with vague uncertain hold on life ;  
It seemed as if the germ of her existence  
Had been struck, the life-thread torn, and that she  
Only struggled upward to renewing health  
To show the depth and anguish of the wound.  
She heard smooth words of comfort, but with pain,  
And only wept, and turned her ever  
To the wall again. All had despaired,  
Save the good Doctor Honoré.  
Both night and day, in darkness and in light,  
With muffled tread and anxious, thoughtful care,

He was the ever patient watcher at her side.  
And time passed on—and yet he wearied not,  
Like those great hearts that serve a life's  
Devotion out, without encouragement or praise,  
At last, one day, at th' earliest peeping of the  
Dawn, when the barred-light glowed through the  
slanting blind,  
And a quick sense crept through the soul of life,  
In silent awe, awakening to the will of  
God, she turned, and eyed the doctor sitting  
there,  
Who neither spoke, nor changed his pensive gaze.  
“Why have you let me live,” asked Isabel,  
“When I so wished to die—and be with him?”  
“Because,” said Doctor Honoré, “I have been  
Prayed by some one here to save your life.”  
And rising up and going to the cradle  
Of the child, he took the helpless little one  
And laid it by the 'stonished mother's side.  
Then, with a sudden cry, she caught it up  
And drew it to her breast. It nestled there, and  
The warm mother's tears gushed forth from

The deep well of her worn eyes, and brake  
The long dull bond of pain that so had wrung  
Her love-lorn heart. "She's saved!" the doctor  
whispered,  
And rushed out to tell to all the joyful tale.

Thus was a mourning-season turned to weal ;  
The mother's soul responded to the call ;  
Yet still, to closer minds, less sanguine than was  
Honoré's, she seemed too frail of life,  
Too much distracted 'tween high Heaven  
And this earth, as if, forever, she had lost  
The first quick spark of hope and buoyant youth.

The village went *en fête* at the good news,  
For Honoré had rapped at every neighbor's  
House, and told all of the wondrous cure. And  
Rosy maidens brought bright flowers to the door,  
For Isabel had been warm friends with all,  
In bygone days, through kindly words and timely  
Charities that had not been forgot.  
The doctor, too, his manner grew more brisk

And gay ; he often came to try to tempt  
Faint Isabel to drive. "Not yet," she'd say ;  
"I'll wait till spring. I cannot bear that wind  
that  
Shakes the trees and drives the ships upon the  
rocks.  
Good doctor, wait ; I am far better so."

The doctor waited ; yet she moped and failed ;  
She gave her babe her every thought and word ;  
Her lips seemed sealed to all the world beside.  
At last, she moved more like a shadow than her  
Former self, and all the fibres of her strength  
Seemed sapped from dearth of self-willed  
Energy.

One day the doctor said  
To her, with mien more grave than was his wont  
"List, Isabel, thou lovest to recall each  
Memory of him thou worshipped when on earth ;  
Yet there is one most sacred thou'st forgot."  
"Impossible ! But tell me what it is,

Since you remember it ! ” said Isabel.  
“ Most clearly I remember it. It was  
A vow—a solemn prayer—that you both made ;  
I made it too. The promises we seal in  
Our brighter days, to be redeemed through all  
Mischance and dread adversity, should  
Not be thus forgotten or denied.  
Now is the night of the fulfilment come.”  
Overwhelmed by the upstarting thought that pricked  
her  
Conscience like her memory, she looked abashed,  
Then, falt’ring, spake : “ Yes, but this cross—”  
“ Is very heavy, Isabel,” said Doctor  
Honoré, full solemnly. “ And so I  
Doubt not that the Lord hath sent it thee.”  
Now she was mute, and a slow tear stood  
Trembling o’er her cheek. Still he went on ;  
Yet twice he faltered in the lesson that  
He gave, as if his own soft heart was bleeding  
At the cold sharp words that must cut first, ere  
They could save. “ Think if a promise made to  
man,

And broken then, dishonor man ; how then shall  
Stand the vows to God ? Perhaps you never  
dreamt  
The day would dawn so dark that this light-  
winged  
Child's vow should rise from out the pent-up  
Past to cry, like life, to be fulfilled.  
'Twere better were it never breathed in prayer  
than  
Glare uncancelled in the face of God."

This broke the barrier of her woe ; it worked  
On Isabel like some quick baptism ;  
As inert waters spring to living streams,  
It crucified the past, and she obtained  
New lease of life and blessed promises,  
In the fair calendar of well-spent days.  
Now dedicated to her child, she walked,  
And found renewing strength in cheering those  
Yet more afflicted than herself. Once more  
The daily freshness to her cheeks returns,  
As if in league with all the gladsome tints

Of dawn. The doctor, too, seemed younger,  
Full ten years. 'Twas more a mastery of words  
Than Esculapian skill ; the proof was  
Isabel saved from the wreck she'd been.

Soon

Little Isabel—as she in play was called—  
Begins to walk, and takes the doctor's hand  
Across the fields, or pulls him by the coat,  
And climbs his knee, and calls him Uncle  
Honoré, as children like to link those whom  
They love unto themselves by some familiar  
Name, held precious in their little world.  
The three were happy as the day is long,  
Till, in the fading autumn of the year, a maiden  
Aunt of Isabel's, who lived alone,  
Some distance from the town, and scarce had  
ever

Called to see her orphaned niece, save when  
Upon her the stiff cords of etiquette  
Were strained, before her neighbors' eyes,  
Came tapping gently at the door. She'd called—

As duty bound—to render service to her niece,  
Who had no nearer kith or kin to counsel  
Her. The doctor's frequent visits had been  
marked,  
And it was time—as she and all her friends  
Had said—that something should be done, before  
The town, the world ! was wholly scandalized.

Then followed notes anonymous, each with its  
Vein of wanton thoughtlessness between the lines ;  
All from “ Dear Friends ” of him that was now  
dead.

The doctor found a change had come on  
Isabel ; she seemed not cold, but more reserved  
Toward him whose every thought, scarce conscious-  
ly, was

Hers. His sudden warmer words found no re-  
sponse,

And fell between them, as she stood abashed.

At night he walked the streets perplexed ;  
He'd thought to ask her, but his heart so beat,  
He could not frame the words.

At last, he sought

A comrade old—a well-tried college friend—  
With much ado, and after oft repeated calls,  
He loosed the whole—as far as he, poor man,  
Knew his own heart ; his friend divined the rest.  
“ Go, marry her,” he said ; “ the case is plain.”  
The doctor’s eyes grew bright and filled with  
tears :

“ Can I thus plead my suit when I have ‘tended  
Her? All my poor services—that some might  
Overrate—would stand before her and cry out !  
She hath refused me once, before poor Martin  
Came to woo. ’Twould seem as if I’d waited  
To indebt her to myself, to broadside  
Force the startling question on. She is alone  
And all bereft, save of the child, which  
I do love as if it were mine own ! ”

His friend saw well how Honoré was moved,  
And pitied him, and prayed that he might help to  
Comfort him, and hold him to the better course.  
At last, he took him by the hand, and strove

To touch his child-like nature and his noble  
Heart with words of fresh persuasion, such as  
these :

“ You say she’s unprotected and alone,  
And that you love the child as if it were your  
Own ; be her protector and a father to the  
Child—you must choose this, or leave her to her  
lot.

From broken words and hints, falls woman’s fame ;  
Then visit her no more, or sue her hand.”

“ True, true,” the doctor sighed ; “ I must not see  
her  
More, though e’en I die.”

With this he rose and left,  
And walked straight to the beach. And there  
He saw the ships move with their shadows  
Keel to keel—it was an Indian-summer’s day.  
Then he stood long, and watched the cloud-lands  
Float full many airy fathoms high along  
The azure sea o’erhead. Then passed these words  
All through his day-dream, as he stood,  
Repeated oft upon his inner ear :

" She is the sweet disorder of thy mind."  
Quick turning, as if to escape the thought,  
He started back ; for lo ! as if by some  
Mad chance, that only Fate foresees,  
Came Isabel, there walking on the beach ;  
She neared, and, as it were unconsciously,  
She took the hand that he held out, and both  
Of one accord sat down upon a rock. And  
Not a word was spoken, save that their eyes met,  
And each, 'twould seem, divined the other's thought,  
As if they had been one.

## PART II.

Methinks

I hear the gentle reader ask :  
“ Is this another ‘ Enoch Arden ’ tale ?  
Or is this Martin truly dead ? ”

What passed

’Twixt Honoré and Isabel, I cannot  
Well here tell. One saw them part, that day,  
Upon the sands, and said : “ The doctor  
Lifted up his hands, as if in blessing  
Isabel, and went his way, while she  
Sat long and wept.”

Was Martin dead ?

The “ Hector ” sailed with orders sealed,  
And none on board for nine days knew  
Her destined course, till, on the quarter deck,  
The captain broke the seal :

“ First to Ceylon,  
And then to cruise in China seas.

Up rose

A goodly cheer. The ship was brought about  
With all points to the south ; the west wind put  
His shoulder to the sail, and she sped on  
Her sparkling wake, amid the massive  
Waves of blue that rose and fell, swayed by  
The breeze, and capped with crystal foam.  
Down through the south she sped, till the good  
south

Seemed almost northerly for cold. And they had  
Planted canvas on the deck to break the wind  
As they moved round the Cape. And soon they  
Touched at Madagascar, where they found  
The British squadron in still waters moored.  
Then northward to Ceylon they crept, through  
throbs

Of languid air, like the hot breath of noon.  
Here Martin wrote to Isabel, and learned,  
Before the Hector sailed again, the death  
Of Allenday, and that he was the happy

Father of a little girl, but nothing of  
The sickness of poor Isabel. He was  
O'erjoyed, and wrote again : " Call this, our child,  
Wee Isabel." On board, he told this glad news  
To the mess, and little Isabel was toasted  
Loud and long ; for all the aftership approved  
Young Martin well, and wished him all good things,  
In their stout open hearts.

And now,  
All northward, day and night, they toiled  
Through a long chain of even months,  
To Okhotsk's desert sea, where three mock suns  
Were seen, by all the wond'ring crew, glide  
From on high, and pass beneath the shore.  
An evil omen thought, by Russian fishers  
Come to barter at the Hector's side.  
Then straightway south once more, by counter-  
Order's countermand, they sped, confused,  
To trap the slaver, smite the pirate craft  
That lurked beneath proud Borneo's reefs,  
Whose bloody nest was hid in Ladrone's Isle.

And now the Hector mounted guard, and moved  
Athwart the prostrate circle of the sea,—  
Now like the burnished disk of the broad moon,  
And then, anon, barred parallel with foam,—  
Where danced the twinkling wavelets, sky to sky,  
Blown by the steady trade-winds of the year.

All seemed rejoiced as the long deck was heeled,  
Toward the rays of the down-pouring sun.  
Some, whose first cruise it was, were on the tiptoe  
For adventure ; others burned for plunder,  
For promotion, or prize monies, in their young  
Expectant hearts. But each slow junk,  
As it would seem, turned out some honest  
Merchantman. Yet all abroad was noised  
Strange ringing tales of landward piracies,  
That stung the blood of all on board that heard.  
At last, one covered night, while lying off  
A bamboo-furnished creek, was heard the turn  
And stealthy dip of paddles, to and fro,  
That came and went, till the first flush of dawn  
Crept with a slow uncertain stillness

'Tween the Hector and the land. Next night,  
The launch was lowered deftly from the side,  
With Martin in command ; and they moved  
Up the sable waters of the creek, until  
The vague and thread-like outline of three mast  
Broke dimly through the barrier of the night.  
They hailed the strange bark where she seemed to  
lie,

For she put forth no light. She answered not,  
Save, on a sudden came a shot. And he  
That spoke fell backward, wounded, in the launch.  
And all at once, as if it were the signal  
For the fray, there seemed to flash a thousand  
Lanterns, right and left, between the upright reeds.  
Then prompt was primed the gatling gun,  
And high above the sharp uncertain crackle of  
The landward fusilade, when'er it was discharged,  
Were heard the tortured heathen's hideous howls.  
But some lay silent in the boat, and others,  
Who perchance were scarcely more than fairly  
scratched,  
Fell headlong in the waters and were lost.

Still undismayed, and with unerring aim,  
Each man that yet could stand, exchanged his shot  
For full a pound of Chinese iron ball.

As God o'ershadows all, deliverance  
Came at last, but not a whit too speedily.  
Quick, at the first report that echoed to the ship  
From the black mouth of the mysterious creek,  
As from the heart of night, the men were  
In their boats, and pulled like madmen for their  
mates.

So was the heat of struggle turned to ease,  
The lanterns scattered from the bloody banks ;  
The skirted heathen fled, till only seen  
Like some bright swarm of fire-flies  
That jewel-decked the up-turned margin  
Of a distant hill.

And Martin straightway  
Boarded the strange craft. And she was booty  
crammed  
From deck to keel, the hatches pressed to bursting  
With good things,—the precious storehouse of

Some yellow chief, whose hated hand had palsied  
Half the trade along that stricken coast.

'Twas then the falling of the tide, and they  
Cut loose her bonds that she might glide, in all  
The laden glory of her size, down the still  
Creek into the quiet basin at the mouth.  
And ere the sun had risen from the early  
Wind-curled sea, she lay beside the stately  
Hector, moored in all security.

A glorious prize was she, and all rejoiced—  
Save they had not the heinous pirate's head  
Withal, to cap the taper mast.

Then was the Hector ordered on again,  
And Martin put on board the prize, with  
A sufficient crew to bring her to Ceylon,  
Where she might be sold, Martin, as the captor,  
Taking the best share.

They watched the Hector's white  
Heels in the humming breeze, her bright-winged  
pennant  
Coupling sea and sky. And with her went their  
hearts,

That long had beat between those narrow sides,—  
Their manhood's foster mother, and their  
Deep-sea home.

The passage to Ceylon  
Was troublesome and long. The "prize" proved  
crank,  
Was lumberly to man, and prone to be  
The creature of the winds, that blew at first  
Adversely to her course. But Martin  
Comforted himself with thoughts of Isabel,  
Of settling down awhile, to revel  
In the smiles and happy sunshine of the love  
Of his sweet wife and child, upon the little  
Fortune he had won. How proud his Isabel  
Would be of these exploits. At Ceylon  
He would write and tell her the glad news,—  
At Ceylon, where his letters waited him.  
And then poor Martin muttered imprecations  
'Gainst the craft that seemed to creep along as if  
Eternity were hers. Anon, his eyes were  
Fixed upon some stedfast point, beyond

The creaking bulwarks of the ship,  
That ever rose and fell ; and thought  
Of little Isabel, and what a big child  
She must now be grown.

Months passed

In little but the tacking up and down,  
With scarce a log-book vantage on  
The destined course. \* Yet patiently, like all  
Fair mariners, they toiled, until by lapse  
Of time and dint of desp'rate will, all  
Wearied out and laden with the dizzy blast,  
They reached the ever-prayed-for, blessed Ceylon,  
And hailed with mad and open-throated cheers  
The brine-bit beacon of the Point de Galle.

Hope, to the old man, is his crutch ;  
A staff to climb with, for the young ;  
But disappointment, like an earthquake,  
Shakes us all in its self-willed decree.  
Here at the Adm'ral's House young Martin found  
No letters waiting him. Have you e'er

Waited years, or even months, in distant parts,  
And feasted on the thought of having news from  
Home? And had it miss? Good Reader, let me  
trust

"T has never been your lot.

At first poor Martin  
Scarcely seized the words—he asked again ;  
And still he thought the clerk, perfunctory  
Withal, had surely erred. He questioned  
Him once more, and stated that the letters  
Would be "Hector" marked. "The 'Hector'?"  
Cried the man. "There is no 'Hector,' sir ;  
She foundered some twelve months ago, with all  
Her complement. Oh, I remember well  
The ship; she had been fitted here ; 'T is now  
Four years last Spring." And marking that  
The light had fled from Martin's face  
He changed his tone, and, turning round,  
He took the "Records" down, and rustling o'er  
The leaves, he said : "Here, sir, here is the  
date :—

First-class corvette of twenty guns." And Martin  
Looked upon the page, but could not read.  
Mechanically he moved toward the door ;  
And there the busy people in the street  
Half wakened him. Yet o'er the shoulders  
Of the moving crowd, he faintly, in  
His fancy, saw the Hector sailing,  
Sailing ever-on. And then the faces  
Of his mates rose up before him, as they  
Were wont to sit at mess ; they talked and laughed;  
But he could hear no sound, save the  
Dull hum and bustle of the street,  
That intervened and sought to rouse him  
To himself.

Two days he lingered near  
The " Offices," to learn what things he could  
Of the ill-fated Hector's loss. And then  
He took his pen to write to Isabel,  
To ask why letters had not come ; but  
On the instant when the pen was to the  
Paper met, it fell from out his hand.

A crushing thought had struck him like  
A knell. What if she thought him dead !  
She might well deem him lost with all the  
Hector's host, not knowing that he had  
Unshipped, returning with the "prize."  
He stood confounded, seized with awe, at this  
Strange issue to his dreams. If this were true  
That she now deemed him lost—Oh, freezing  
thought !

He dare not write, informing her that  
He was yet alive, in dread the sudden news,  
Such wanton bursting into being, without care,  
Might shake her mind, or subtly injure her.  
And sadly Martin pondered long. He felt  
His seeming solitude come hard upon him,  
Like the folds of a cloud-covered night,  
Full of a vext suspense, that brooded o'er  
The unsolved present and the future, like  
An evil spell. What was the news  
That had reached home ? This, was the doubt,  
The taunting mystery he burnt to know.  
What tidings had met Isabel ? This,

Martin asked himself, till e'en his own  
Swift shadow seemed to echo : "What?"  
Pursuing him, and ever crying : "What?"

At last, in few,  
He settled on a plan. He'd read along  
The columns of "The Gazette of the Point  
De Galle" the names of many officers  
Recalled unto their Indian posts by  
The uneasy aspect of the times, and  
Was about to 'mark he knew not one,  
When, as by chance, the name of Carnac  
Stood from out the rest. This was his plan :  
To meet Lord Carnac, who was then expected  
Shortly at Madras to join his regiment,  
And learn from him, who, doubtless, all would know.  
He left Ceylon, and hopefully he journeyed  
On to Fort St. George, to sandy, hot Madras,  
And there awaited him. And Martin strove  
To read, for outward things absorbed him not,  
To drive at bay the irking time that hung  
Rebellious on the hour hand, and mocked

His patient nights, and pictured to his weary  
Wakefulness dark empty days to come.

At last Lord Carnac came ; but dazed-like, stared  
Long after Martin had cried out : “ ’T is I ! ”  
And said his name, and held to him his hand ;  
And then when Carnac took the hand, it seemed  
As if ’t were more to reassure himself  
Of Martin’s being flesh and blood,  
Than to renew th’ acquaintance of the past.  
“ I thought the greedy fishes of the sea  
Had eaten thee—thy ship was lost,  
”T was said, with all her complement.”  
Then Carnac turned, and looked away,  
And filliped with his sword, as if  
Unconscious Martin still was there.  
But Martin, boyishly, let loose the theme  
That long had gnawed his heart and struggled  
On his lips: “ Does my wife know the Hector’s  
lost ? ”  
“ She thinks thee dead with all the rest.”  
“ Great mercy! I had thought—I’d feared all this,—

Go on—say more—how is she now ?”

“ Well—well. Thy child is also well.”

“ My little one ! ” cried Martin, and he watched  
The officer like one who thirsts and hungers  
Yet for more, and covets what he almost dreads.

Now Carnac slowly paced the ground, his eyes  
Cast down, with cautious steps, as if he feared  
The bridge of his disclosures would not  
Bear him o'er. At last, from out the corners  
Of his eyes he glanced at Martin's face,  
Then spoke, as if determined for the blow :—  
“ 'T is long the Hector hath been lost.”  
From head to foot a chill through Martin ran ;  
There was a seeming sense of hidden meaning  
In the words, that had struck back his blood.  
“ Speak, Carnac, is there something strange in this ?  
Nay, say the worst, if there be aught to tell !  
She—she—she cannot be betrothed ? ”  
“ Thy wife and Doctor Honoré are one ! ”  
So saying, Carnac having done his worst,  
As best to keep himself in countenance,

Turned full, and stared at Martin where he stood ;  
Who clung now to the parapet to keep  
From falling ; for his bent knees shook  
Like one that 's palsy-stricken in the legs.  
“O, Isabel ! O, Isabel ! ” he cried,  
And breathed as if it were his last.  
Then came a mutt'ring 'tween his teeth :  
“ Had I not visioned-up some dread mishap  
Of shadows come 'tween me and thee—and Carnac's  
Here to put the black cap on it all,—  
I'd not believe thy heart could change in haste.  
But I can reason now—I am not blind,  
Or deaf, or anything but what I am,—  
A wretched man. Could'st thou not wait ?—  
'Twere better had'st thou seen me dead.  
The Doctor hath undone me in her sight,  
Base man—black heart—unhallowed friend !—  
Yet—no, 't is false—I'll not believe—  
Sdeath, 't is a lie—an awful lie ! ”

On this, a something of exultant hate,  
Repressed by caution, if not fear, passed like

A flash, imperfectly, o'er Carnac's eyes,  
Yet brisk his all-dissembled part  
Recovering, he feately made reply :  
" I saw them wedded, walking arm in arm,  
All through the village, in the noonday sun."  
And Martin shook again. " No more ! " he cried,  
" No more ! my ears are rent with this accursed  
Harbinging. Speak not, good Carnac ; say no  
more.

For when I feel his heart so in the sun,  
Thus clothed withal by seeming lawful ties,  
Perchance, fanned softly with sweet love--con-  
soled,  
Forgetful that it loved before,—  
With given right to claim my child as his,  
That she may call him ' Father ' evermore.  
My very soul, revolting, sees a thousand  
Devils round me play ! And I know not the thing  
I say, or do. Some Godless treachery  
While I was out on those cursed seas hath  
Sucked her into this—my Isabel—my wife ! "  
" Come, then," said Carnac, now unburdened

To perceive that Martin questioned on no more,  
But had drunk in the poison to his heart ;  
“ My men may watch us here. Come to my quar-  
ters,

And rest there at ease. “ T is better, come.”  
And once within, poor Martin cast him down  
And prayed. While Carnac’s countenance  
Set free a strange triumphant shade, that deep-  
ened

As the silent, stricken mariner still  
Unremitting knelt ; his honest shoulders bent  
In immolation of his grief to God,  
A last bright ray of succor in despair.

When Martin rose, upon his brow cold drops  
Stood like the scars of hard-won victory  
O’er the deep passions that upheaved his  
Inmost and all-centred self ; the struggle  
To uproot the past and bury it for aye,  
To find new strength, to seize the broken future  
With both hands, still to push on a blasted life.  
“ I am resolved ! ” at last he murmured out,

Like one who hath pronounced his own death sentence

On himself, and waits 'tween earth and heaven  
For the blow. "Those fiercer comforts that assuage

A soul that hath not higher attributes,  
Become me not in this ; I am resolved."

"Resolved to what ?" broke Carnac forth.  
"Do nothing,—dead men nothing do.

But I will seek Venezia's port,  
Where sleeps a cloistered islet on the wave,  
And there, with altered spirit, will I dwell,  
And end my now dismembered days ;  
That Isabel may never know the Hector  
Could give up her dead, to walk like some  
Dread surplus on the face of the green earth,  
As swollen flotsam slowly finds the shore."

"Well mastered !" cried the lord. "Thou speakest well,

Right manfully. It is the very step  
I would commend, a worthy plan

To dote upon. Thou shalt accoy thy mood  
To circumstance, that thou may'st find fresh life  
To wear away the tatters of the old.  
My heart sore bled at first, in breaking  
Thus to thee what fate alone was master of.  
But now, I see thee as a prayerful man ;  
Besides most resolute in heart, defiant  
Of those dread alternatives I could have  
Feared for thee. Thou couldst have gone stark  
Rabid in a craze to kill thyself, and seen  
To hook thine own self-murder round my neck,  
Because I deemed it fair to tell thee all.  
Then I am glad--this for thy sake—  
Thou dost not crave inabstinence ;  
To over-board thyself into some nobbler  
Of niminity ; to drown thyself,  
Yet let thy sorrow swim. This could not fool or  
Fuddle thy good head into oblivion ;  
The past would e'en dispute the bottle  
In thy hand, and make thee look with even more  
Dyspeptic eyes on thy abnormal lot.  
Still one word more : Though young in years, I'm  
tutored

And grown old in gray experience  
By dint of many slips, that I seem full  
At times of importune advice ; yet mark,  
If this be thy determined will, most manly,  
Noble as it is, that Isabel, thy wife,  
Should still account thee dead, be prescient  
To depart, and screen thyself. Be off at once,  
Lest some in my old regiment should dream  
They 'd seen thy face before, and aught be hawked  
And fly abroad on our village air.  
Go, mask thy life, or be it on thy head ;  
Resile not from thy fixed intent. Adieu !”  
“ Farewell ! Grief wants no comment ere it err.”  
Cried Martin, as he passed with his life burden  
Down the hill. While Carnac watched him moving  
O'er the drooping shoulders of the slope, until  
He'd vanished down a grassy fold.

Then round  
About the fort there crept the double shade  
Of the soft breathing night, while northward  
O'er Madras shone a dull baleful light, like an

O'erhanging evil star, whose blunted rayons,  
Fanned by some unnatural breath, flashed darkly,  
Like Lord Carnac's raven eyes, as in wrapped  
Reverie he paced the sidelong parapet.  
On went Martin, ever on, with shadows  
Round him like the night, yet his eyes fixed  
Upon a steadfast point,—a certain light, a pure  
White, sacred flame, that burnt upon him  
In the gloom, like a bright rift ascending  
Unto God. The pledge he 'd plighted  
In the dead years past came throbbing into life,  
Like some new goal that beaconed his approach  
To realms of peace. And e'er he 'd journeyed far  
He kissed the cross, and bore it with him,  
And eftsoons it chastened him. Though shadows  
    played  
About him, ever played, as oft would glide  
The vision of the wedded pair, close bound,  
And seemingly rejoicing in their state.

In few, at last, through many way-worn days,  
He reached San Lazzaro, the little "islet "

In Venezia's port. And there, to one old  
Startled monk, confided all his tale ;  
And how he would shut out dead years,  
And live anew a life without a past.  
“Thou shalt be novice here,” said the good man,  
“Three years before thou take the final vows.”  
And Martin thanked the old monk from his heart,  
And there abode between the shelt’ring walls  
Of the round isle, and changed his name,  
And donned the novice’s long garb.  
And as time passed, he took a comfort  
In the services, and in the worship  
Of the holy Rood, which they all kissed  
And held close to each breast, and in the tending  
Of sweet flowers fed by a bright living font  
Between the cloisters ’neath a cloudless sky.

And thus, in few, three years had almost noiseless  
Slipped from out the even walks of his new life,  
And the fore-reaching hand of time had swung  
About, and pointed to the day when  
Martin was to kneel and make his last

Cenobic vows before the open shrine.  
And he was being wrought with all meet  
Questionings, close closeted with a priest,  
When all along the gallery there stole  
The hiss subdued of whispers passed from  
Mouth to mouth. And Martin then was called,  
And stood before a man of sturdy mould,  
With face full open to the sun ; a stranger  
Who had prayed so long to see the "brother"  
He described, that knowing well 'twas Martin  
whom

He sought, the elders let him in, for Martin  
Had not vowed his life-long vows. Thus spake  
the man :

"I was Lord Carnac's steward, and with his  
Last faint breath he charged me seek you out,  
To bear this letter unto you."

And Martin broke the seal and read :

"Of all the men I have most wronged, thou,  
Martin,  
Art the one I've spared least in revenge.  
But curse me not, for I do bleed to death,

And cannot live to see the sun go down  
This day. I cannot fly the voices that  
Arise as if to cry me into hell !  
And I would make my soul more meet for God.  
I lied to thee, but curse me not !  
The thought came swiftly on me to despoil  
Thy life of Isabel, whom I once loved,  
As thou knowest well, in rested years. One day,  
    't was  
After all had mourned thy certain-seeming loss,  
I saw the doctor take her hand ;  
I, having marked him come upon the sands  
With wild, dejected look, had hid myself  
Behind an upright stone. Thy wife spoke not  
Till he'd poured forth his tale, and then, astonished,  
As 't would seem, thus plainly answered him :  
“ Though Martin now be passed from earth,  
I am no less his wife ; for his soul lives  
And waits for mine to be set free, and join  
Him there, when I have carried to the end  
This earthly cross that I have sworn to bear.”  
Then Honoré rose up as if his spirit

Had been crushed ; but blessed thy wife and went  
His way—while she remained and wept.  
And this is holy truth, as I am now  
A dying man. Oh, Martin, curse me not ! ”

But Martin read no more, all things before  
His eyes began to reel and sway,  
And seeing the good steward, who 'd brought the  
note,

Close at his side, he said : “ Come in my cell  
And read these lines to me ; my mind has turned ;  
I cannot understand to read myself.”

And both went in, and Martin lay as  
In a maze. While the kind steward read the short  
Paper o'er and o'er, till Martin's spirit  
Opened to the words, and full-awakened  
Joy crept in his soul. And he cried out  
Exultingly, and praised Almighty God.  
And the steward said his Master'd fallen  
At Cabul, from wounds of the dread Sepoy's lance,  
In an upstart revolt. And died confessing  
All that e'er he did—so penitent

E'en to the dust—that holy men despaired not  
That he would be saved. Then came the good  
Old monk, to whom he had confided first  
His sad and wond'rous tale, and he, kind soul,  
Rejoiced at Martin's strange deliverance,  
But argued such blest news should not  
Be too abruptly broke to Isabel.  
Discretion should be duly marked, he claimed,  
Let, first of all, some trusty messenger  
Be found to go, before he, Martin came.  
And take a trinket, why, a buckle or  
A ring, and say : "This I have charged myself  
To bring. And if she question, 'Hath his body,  
Then, been found and taken from the sea ?'  
To answer fair : 'No man hath seen him dead.'  
So play upon her till the light break in,  
As day doth gently overslip the night,  
Without awaking suddenly. And Martin  
Well approved the plan ; but who should be  
The trusty messenger ? "Then," said the good monk,  
"I would venture thence, were I not racked with  
years."

But spake the steward : “ Give me the trinket—  
I have sworn unto my dying lord,  
Who was by conscience sore accouped,  
To see this great thing done, these twain hearts  
met.”

And Martin cried : “ Yea, go ! ” “ Then I depar  
And go in haste, but thou, young master  
Voyage leisurely upon my cautious track,  
Curb thy hot spirit as I quicken mine.  
And when thou ’st journeyed joyous to the end,  
Then ’bide without the village, at some inn  
Where I shall come.”

At Villa Allenday,  
With the sweet smell of new-mown hay,  
Amid the piping of the merry birds,  
Sweet-throated throstles, fond of mistletoe,  
And all the feathered host of summer noon,  
Before an open lattice that o’er-hung  
A sweep of em’rald lawn, sat Isabel.  
And, like a sunbeam, little Isabel came  
To and fro, and brought fresh flowers for

A wreath her mother twined. But there was still  
Another in the room, abiding cautiously  
His time—the kindly steward. ‘How can I thank  
You, sir, enough,’ said Isabel, “or half  
Repay you for these cherished gifts which you  
Have brought to me, his widowed wife—  
A thoughtful care?” “By trusting that a greater  
Joy is yet in store for you, the sweetest I  
Could name,” broached the good steward, so dry  
and hungry  
Was he to be on. “I comprehend you not,”  
Quoth Isabel, “and I pray you, fair sir,  
To speak no more like this.” “But I have come  
To you, kind madam, on this very point.”  
“Then,” quickly answered Isabel, with her  
Full gaze on him that spoke, “beware, lest I  
Misunderstand you not, or that you raise  
Strange hopes, and play on one who is already  
Crushed to earth.” “All that I ask is that  
You be prepared,” returned the steward.  
And seeing little Isabel, who had stood  
By to hear, her mother caught at her,

And holding her close to her breast, she said,  
With trembling voice : “ I know not what this  
Stranger would—I understand him not.”  
But the child understood the man, and saw  
That he spoke true, and cried : “ Why ! Papa  
That was dead has come to life again—  
Hurrah ! ” And the glad child rushed out with  
A long ribbon tied unto a stick and cried :  
“ My father that was dead is now alive !  
My father ’s come home ! ”

And seeing that the time  
Was come, the steward left Isabel. And Martin,  
Who had stood without, came in, and clasped  
In his strong arms his fainting wife, and kissed  
Her parted lips, till he could hear her whisper  
“ Martin—Martin— ” in his ear, as she lay  
Motionless, half stunned with sudden ecstasy—  
And there they both remained, till little  
Isabel came up, and stood before  
Her father’s wond’ring eyes—a bonny child—  
And Martin kissed, and questioned her, and seeing

In her hand a wreath : “ And what is this  
Fair wreath, my child ? ” he asked. And sorrow-  
fully

She made reply : “ This is for the great cross  
Of Uncle Honoré,” as she was wont  
To call him, out of childish love, “ who saved  
Dear mother’s life, when, father, you were dead.”  
“ ’T is for the cross of the new tomb, she means,”  
Said Isabel, and wound her arms about  
Her husband’s neck, and wept.

## SATAN OF THE SEA.

*Oft, from the past, there comes the music  
Of a northern tale, all rude and bold,  
That when my sister led me by the hand,  
Through childhood's sunny fields, she told ;  
Nor sung to any but to me.*

'Twas rude withal by blighted Norland's reefs,  
Where, from the salted platform of blue-flint acute,  
The hard, round turrets lift their unbent necks,  
Dark cankered with the stain of iron bolts  
And tires, eaten out by the uplifted brine,  
Dashed to the clouds by the shrill winds of time.  
As yet the rock, defiant, lifts its head,  
And shakes the tempest from its dripping mane,  
Still laves and thumps the sidelong sea  
The water gate, and souses o'er the walls ;  
But all within is dashed abroad by the avenging  
hand

Of Providence' fair rule, that sudden strikes  
The staggering tyrant in his rouse all cold  
And blackened to his rugged bed, like some  
Scourged hound night-strangled by an avalanche.

## PART I.

A-past long centuries dwelt Kane, dread viking,  
By the polac main, of beetling brow,  
Black-eyed, black-bearded, quick-handed with the  
mace,  
Of sinewy nerve, with neck and arms of steel,  
And thick with quivering brawn. A mighty foe-  
man  
Whose lawless zeal, to booty, fearless might  
Enhunger in the dreaded night ;  
When, from his stormy, wind-wrapped keep,  
He flings his flaming cressets to the moon,  
False signals, to beguile the southern bark,  
Till his grim visage glares upon the storm-worn  
crew,  
Condemned to die, or be the dungeon's spoil ;

While dredges out and drags, the vassal pack,  
The heavy curling wave, for pelf,  
Along the torn and broken wreck ;  
And from the four blind walls, all dark within,  
Anon, doth rise the maiden's long shrill scream,  
Too oft extinguished ere the dawn, caught by  
The winds, and carried to the stars on high.

But this was his night sport ; by day he held  
His court and sat, in all baronial pomp,  
Within his broad-arch'd hall ; where he might greet  
The embassies of potent lords,  
Dispense rude justice 'twixt vassal and to serf,  
And bind all to his stern decree. And on  
His right, sits Julian, slight, with golden hair,  
Not like his sire he, but, like his mother, fair.  
And on his left sate Helgé, baron's younger son,  
But, like his father : see the cruel mouth,  
The untamed eye, the frowning brow withal.  
Now Kane loved Helgé well, as the rude bear  
May love the whelp, that never crossed his path  
That bated down to every wish, and was

His awful counterpart ; that in the fight  
A comrade stood, a partner in the spoil.

But Julian he loved not—his mother's dream,  
On whose blue eyes she fed her fondest hopes.  
Though now 't was long she 'd sought repose from  
    all

Despair and tears, fair lady Iugebarg,  
Once loved, revered by all but her harsh lord,  
The castle's angel light, the captive's hope,  
The tyrant's dread, but she, alas ! was dead.

Sir Julian scarce remembered her, nor all  
Her goodly fruits, but, from mere fealty  
Of blood, within his father's walls,  
He bore his mother's cross ; oh, weary, weary  
Is the day, and hopeless is the night ;  
He 'd never heard the Saviour's name, nor seen  
The Spirit's light that shone upon the way.

He sought the priest of Odin's star-built fane ;  
The tempest screamed along the sea, now cracked

The frozen hills above ; still to the priest  
With silver beard, with cowl and flint-hewn knife,  
In full heart's-hope he rides.

Night after night  
By Balder's altar, burning red, he cries  
And conjures up the dull awakening past,  
The sleepless voices of his mournful thought :  
“ Had but my brother lived ! ”

The old man's eye,  
So bright and cold, on runic cyphers dwells,  
Anon, on Julian's face it gleams, and now  
Stands fixed in thought. “ Oh, would my beardless  
Brother breathed, who slew, with empty hand,  
The blue-toothed bear beneath the linden tree.”  
Then sudden rose the hoary priest, his beard  
All streaming wild, and sought the outward night.  
Long gazed he on the East, but turning to  
The West, he marked the Nor god's light between :  
“ Valhalla feasts without her guests, I ween ;  
Then learn thy brother lives, but banished, like  
A guilty thing, to India's torrid banks,  
Whose burning waters beam like burnished brass,

By all a fitful sire's hate outcast,  
And with a scornful name, then branded,  
'Satan of the Sea.' And there, he bears  
Dark Buddha's cross, all red athwart his brow ;  
And sits with savages at meat,  
No more to quaff the frothing nut-brown mead,  
Nor see the fair-haired Norland-maid's soft cheek  
Reflect the polar flame. As to  
The fatherland he cried ' Farewell,' he wept  
Upon my breast. ' Farewell, farewell for aye ! '  
He sobbed, and pouring out his agony  
Against my heart, I felt his spirit break.  
I marked his look was changed, and there remained  
What scarce might seem a semblance  
Of his better mind."

Then slowly sank  
Sir Julian on his bended knee, and wept.  
The old man turned within.

The light upon  
The altar flared and died. A-down rushed all  
The unspent winds from the eternal snows,  
That smote the groaning shore amain,

And slowly broke the roar from crumbling peaks,  
And hissed the giant ice bolt in the brine,  
Above the thunders of the rising sea.

“ Away to horse ! my brother shall be free !  
Not venger of the blood I ’ll be, but of  
Unnatural hate, a parent’s craven love,  
That like the soulless savage beast  
Would strip and tear its nursling young.”  
Rode Julian true, until, above the keen  
And slippery flint, there loomed on high  
The salt-burned bastions of the dreaded lord  
Against the outspread panoply of dawn.

“ What ! ” cried the rugged Kane, as heaved  
His hirsute breast, “ I did not tell thee  
He was dead ; ” then knit his angry brow ;  
“ Go with thy fancied dreams and shame no more  
My house. Out of my sight with thy  
Dead mother’s face.” Then, with great strides  
He crossed the hall, and kicked the dog that lay  
Athwart the porch ; then with another oath,

He brake his ribs, because the poor brute groaned,  
And shattered half the door. Now Julian  
Turned him to the fair-haired serfs, that  
Nestled to the wall. "And have ye seen  
My brother of the sea?" But all were mute  
With fright, and some e'en sought to fly.

Then by the light of shimmering night,  
That dots the snow hills round and white,  
He sought once more the temple's shrine.  
The old man, there, was bowed in prayer.  
Great Balder's fire burnt no more ;  
The flame had died on the cold runic stone.

"Oh, Odin, Frey, and mighty Thor!"  
The old man cried, "have mercy on us now ;  
The light hath flown from out the fane,  
Portending danger to the North,  
Foreboding griefs as yet unknown.  
'T would seem the Gods the thane rebuke ;  
That dread displeasure broods upon his walls,  
As ravens croak distress, and points adown  
To India in the sultry seas."

Perfidious night, propitiously had smiled ;  
Both live and dead, the booty strew  
The castle's deep-resounding court.

And now there rose a great, coarse laugh  
As from some dread abyss, as if  
To mock the chaste and red'ning dawn,  
That coyly peeped above the airy keep.  
The thane, with Helgé, cast the golden die  
For vantage in the gain ; a Dutch galleon  
'T had been, deep freighted to her curving keel,  
With Eastern hordes, between her polished sides  
Thick packed, that had been raped and racked  
When the pale, watchful moon had sudden slipt  
Behind a dark, conspiring cloud.

“ Come, come, a truce to niggard luck ”  
Quoth Kane, and quaffed his mead-horn dry,  
“ Thou, Helgé, hast the pearls, and those  
Three half-crazed girls far better bare-foot bait  
For hounds along the Yule-tide snow,  
Than meet for else, I trow ; And I

Will store these glossy staves of silk  
With that dun Cyprus wine, with foam of rose,  
With this score bars of gold, and what  
May now befall the wreckers on the wall  
Of what remains unshipped. What say'st thou, son ?  
Art thou content ? If so, 't is well."

But now

The bugle brays along the inner hall,  
The baron dons his cap of state, and all  
Are ranged within, and Julian sits  
Upon the right, and Helgé on the left.

Then, from the midst, an old man stands,  
Half-bent upon his staff ; his loins are girt ;  
His beard is swathed, like snow, upon his breast ;  
His cold, bright eye, now marks the thane ;  
And soft with accents calm, and cowl thrown back,  
Before the throng he holds his sage discourse :  
“ Long live the thane ! Peace to thee, Kane !—  
Amen.

The priest am I of Odin's fane and

Balder's sacred grove, now from whose altarpiece  
The ghostly fire's fled—caught up to  
The eternal skies, from whence it dropped  
To thankless earth, ere the first Norland Jarl  
Had stripped and slain his earliest foe.  
Thou had'st a son, once cherished by the gods.”  
Then through the knights a murmur spread,  
In tree-top fancy, like Boreas  
In the beeches, when the heavy season comes.

And the thane, he held him quiet,  
As, in troubled thought, he pondered,  
And prepared to make reply.  
But the old man still was glaring,  
With his eyes so deadly cold.  
Now the hall is hushed to silence,  
For the thane would make reply :  
“ Now, old man, take caution,  
As the best that I can give.”

Then sounds the trumpet's shrill alarm ;  
All eyes were on the door ;

A messenger, steel-clad, then clattered in,  
And glittered in the foremost rank.

“ Who comes with such unequal strides  
To face the dread viking ? ”

“ Four hundred Northmen lance  
Would parley with the thane.”

“ What, ho ! Stand close with partisan and mace.  
Who are ye then that dare  
To break upon me thus ? ”

“ The vassels of the great, high Jarl,  
Who knows the Norland’s woe ;  
The fire’s out within the sacred grove.”

Then bowed the thrane full low : “ Be honored to  
My court, I knew not who ye were ;  
Pray, enter ye, the foremost of the file,  
And quaff with me the goodly mead ;  
Then sit awhile at meat with all

My knights so bold, and with them in the cup

A second Jule-rouse hold."

Then turning to a secret scribe :

"Write letters to the south—Now claim the gods

My son, that 's cast abroad by India's reefs."

Then 'tween his teeth he murmured low :

"All in the dark, send thence a bark,

With such a trusty crew, that he shall find

Some passing wave his head-stone and his grave,

This Satan of the Sea ! "

#### PART II.

The halberdiers, wrapped in their shaggy bea  
skins,

Kept watch o'er the towers of Kane,

As the flag on the keep unbent its dark fold ;

While the sun on the wave-top all glittered with  
gold ;

And the guests of the thane sat merry within.

Beside each knight's chair, a maiden, full fair,

Stood smiling, to wait his beckon and will ;

Like soft-moving stars, half hid by the cloud  
Of mirror-like breastplates and pluming-bright  
helms.

The wild boar was hung with garlands all gay,  
And smelt the fresh dye of sweet rosemary  
From a platter of silver, that shone like the moon  
O'er the fields of white snow, and the  
Mead-horns now flowed with red Rhenish wine ;  
They drank to Lord Kane, he drank to the Jarl :  
When the skalds had each sung a ballad  
Both bloody and long, and applause had been  
Given with the sword on the shield,  
Then rose the dark thane, with a look in his eye  
That, to those who knew best, portended no weal :

“ Some jousts, or sword-play we haply might see,  
Child-sport, to span the season ere night ;  
There sits my son o' the flaxen hair,  
At two-handed sword there is none so fair,  
I swear, and pledge him in this cup.”

The high Jarl's ancient knights, with faces scarred  
Like runic stones, and brows deep furrowed in

Long wars, all slowly turned their necks of steel,  
And marked the youth, of whom the thane thus  
boasts.

There sat fair Julian, and his curls  
Around his shoulders mantled like a girl's ;  
And on his arm his falcon perched,  
Shared half his loving master's plate ;  
Then glancing up to meet so many eyes,  
The crimson rose and fell, like fire on the snow.

One ruddy knight then curled the lip in scorn,  
And others, worn with riper years, half turned  
And laughed, or caught a neighbor's eye  
With furtive look, half clothed in mockery.

But some there were, who know his strong arm  
well,

Who nod their plumes, and murmur him applause.  
Quick flies the flame to Julian's brow,  
Nor fades it now again ; up leaps he, like  
A blood-roused bear pricked to the quick by  
thorns,

And shakes the angry falcon from his arm,  
That, screeching, rushes 'midst the taunting throng ;

Then quick unsheathed, he slashes down  
His willing sword upon the loaded board  
With such a might and furious din,  
That all the pent-up echoes ring  
From the high eaves and arches of the place.  
“ How now ! How now ! ” quoth one young  
knight,  
“ I’ll mate thee, with the two-edged sword ;  
Come, then, let ’s to the sally-port without,  
And there, on solid ground, we’ll have a bout,  
There measure prowess, man to man,  
And split a bonnet, he who can.”

The battlements were thronged, the dungeon tower,  
And all the airy keep. The spearmen on  
The sidelong hill, opposed, leaned on their shields  
Of shaggy hides, and silent gazed below,  
As on the plain between, the dauntless two  
Stood forth alone, and clutched their eager swords,  
Like two young eaglets, newly matched.  
Both fiercely glared, and slowly crept around,  
Uncertain where at first to plant a blow.

“ Strike now, thou laggard, strike,” quoth Julian  
To the knight, “ I ’ve else to do than wait on thee ;  
Thou it was that challenged me.”

Then lunged the knight  
And followed up amain a double slash,  
That Julian flung aside, retorting with  
A sweeping cut, but missed ; then both drew off  
And stooped aside, while with quick panting breath  
They watched, and played, like lovers, with their  
eyes.

Till now the knight comes on again,  
But Julian smites him ’twixt the necklace and  
The shoulder-piece, then turns him on his face.  
A-down the headlong slope, with brandishments  
And yells, came all the host, each like  
Th’ avenger of a brother’s blood let loose.

Sir Julian, with a glance of scorn,  
Caught up the strange knight’s fallen sword,  
Walked slowly to the barbican, and clapped  
His harnessed shoulders to the wall, and waite !

Patiently, with, in each hand, a steel-blue sword,  
Till all the swarm had gathered howling round.

“Get ye to bed, ye low-bred churls,” he cried ;  
“Was not the sword-play fair and meet to see ?”  
Then, with a proud intrepid look,  
He sought each cow’ring eye, that leered away  
And dare’st not meet his gaze. Then some  
behind

Cried : “On, and pin him to the wall !”  
But those before said “ Hold ! ” But suddenly  
The sally-port flew open wide, like some  
Huge monster’s jaw, and Julian darted through.  
As, when a mighty hunter turns aside,  
The savage wolf quick leaps upon his back,  
So, with a greedy cry, all rushed to follow  
On his track, pressed by the mass without.  
Down dropped the cullis with its crunching teeth  
Resounding with a hollow, death-like ring,  
With tons of scalding brine ; and for a space,  
Like worms, the burnt ones turn and squeak,  
All interlaced in knotted agony,—  
And no more sought to enter in.

Then vowed the northern knights, returning o'er  
The snows, to be revenged, ere thaw should touch  
Their hearts, ice-burnt, at such dishonoring deeds.  
Against the thane they'd wield a force amain ;  
Bring all their yelping vassals at their heels ;  
Exterminate the race - and hoist  
The hateful towers at one crack ; scoop out  
The four dark walls ; and leave the empty shell  
To be the shrill derision of the winds.

Now on the last Jarl's lance declining o'er  
The wrinkled necks, that joined the rigid  
Ghostly hills—all gaunt and desolate—  
Toward the abyss of the upstarting night,  
Is seen the last chill quiver, red and white,  
In the cold ripples of the polar light.

And from the keep the baron laughed a long  
Intemp'rate laugh, and turned below.  
Sir Julian laughed—not he ; but sought t' escape  
The servile courtesy and praise with which  
His eager vassals heralded his deeds,

And made the goblets in the guard-room ring,  
He hung the dead knight's sword upon  
A linden tree, and left it there, to nod  
And curtsey to the breeze, to be forgot.  
And now, Sir Julian walked apart ;  
He seemed his own strict confidant in all ;  
Nor paired with any that approached ;  
Like the lone eagle, his sad soul  
Deserted all for boundless solitude ;  
By rock and crumbling cliff he wandered o'er  
The creaking sands, along the frozen shore ;  
And oft would stop some startled mariner  
To ask : " If 't were a southern wind that blew ? "Old Time rolled on, borne on the season's wheel,  
But marked his furrows on Sir Julian's brow.

The red sun, bent beneath the wintry sky,  
Pauses, and leaps from crag to peak,  
Along the phantom margin of the earth ;  
T' is neither night nor day, but some  
Half compromise doth pair and join the two.  
At last, 't was noised the rumor : that

An Indiaman's white sail was seen afar,  
Like some suspended flake of snow, upon  
The southern limits of the open sea,  
Whose broad unnatural calm portended ill.

Then rode the messengers abroad to every  
Neighboring thane and noble by the shore ;  
Lord Kane would hold a full levee,  
A banquet in his spacious halls,  
To welcome his returning son ;  
And prayed all hasten to his walls,  
Before the brewing storm break forth,  
And make inclement the highways.

The red sun passed beneath the snow ;  
Soft darkness fell upon the keep ;  
Sir Julian marked the sail no more,  
And through him ran a thrill, which was  
Not that of glad, expectant joy,  
But like a quiver, cold and chill,  
That uninterpreted stole to his heart.  
And filled his breast with sadness and with awe.

Anon, the warm south breeze in tiny whirlwinds  
Played below, but soon the billows whitened  
In the night, and cast their heads  
Against the stones, yet timidly at first.  
The lights were set upon the parapet,  
That hung embattled o'er the wave.

“‘ T will be a troubled night,’ quoth one rough  
guard ;  
“No living soul may land upon the rocks.”  
“Are all the guests within ?” then asked his mate.  
“Ay ! marry ; all that enter by  
The water gate, the great state entrance to  
The banquet hall ; for them that come by land,  
Ask him upon the barbican ;—  
Look down, dost thou not mark the sea is  
changed ? ”

Within, there burnt a hundred lamps,  
Like stars, upon the tall resplendent walls ;  
And on the marble space beneath  
Was dressed the long baronial board ;

While in an arbor knit of boughs  
Prepared by serfs, musicians sat  
And waited, with their instruments in hand.  
The guests were scattered o'er the hall,  
And walked in pairs, the soft white hand  
Upon the iron sleeve, the jeweled breast  
Reflected in the harnessed steel,  
Like glowing snow in northern twilight bathed.  
It was a beauteous sight ; the noble lords,  
Like waving oaks, their proud crests bent  
Among the clinging, rustling vines, to catch  
The rapturous murmur of the upturned leaves.

Against a polished column Julian stood apart,  
And though his eyes were set upon the throng,  
He marked them not in his abstracted gaze ;  
He only heard the moaning wind without,  
Complaining to the wave that beat and wrenched  
The creaking hinges of th' assaulted gates.

The night crept on with soft, mysterious steps.  
And now at banquet sat the guests,  
Beneath the broad and blazing hoops of light.

" My son shall come anon," quoth Kane ;  
" And be persuaded, he doth only bide  
The temper of this fitful wind, ere he,  
By this protraction, make us doubly glad."

Then came a pause, and from without  
A brine-bolt struck the seaward doors amain,  
And sank receding with a moan.

Some knights grew grave and slow to speak,  
And fair dames smiled with cheek all pale,  
But, doubtless, 'twas the lamps, that sank  
And seemed to whiten with the gale.

Now all was cleared for less substantial fare ;  
The wine was hurried in, and goblets filled,  
And some o'erflowed, and dripped upon the stones ;  
While many drank before a toast was passed.

" Not such a night before hath racked this shore,"  
Quoth one scarred ancient knight, as from  
The casement sprung the spray, and dashed them  
o'er ;

And all above, the thunder pealed amain ;  
The great gate shook and bent its massive bolts ;

While unbeknown, from off the giddy keep,  
The sentry had been blown, but none had heard  
The hollow thump that jarred the court below.

“ Bring forth the Spanish dancers, ho !  
Strike up the maddest, loudest strain !  
We 'll be as merry as the gale,” quoth Kane.

Out nimbly stepped three black-eyed girls across  
The marble flags, before the dreaded arch ;  
And poised, with timbrels raised above their heads.  
A silence fell within, without ;  
A rushing sound, and then a double crash,  
And fell the timbrels with a hollow ring,  
As, noiselessly, the great doors swung within,  
Like two black magic wings, all loose and free,  
That noiseless bend at some dread spirit's call ;  
The guests had started to their feet,  
And scattered far and near.

’Twas now observed,  
Before the two great doors that dripped with brine,

A muffled stranger bare-head stood ;  
He seemed to gaze around, and, as he turned,  
The wind caught up his sable locks, that hung  
Upon his swarthy brow, displaying there,  
Like sword-cuts met athwart, a faint red cross ;  
And, as he stood, the clamoring gale died down,  
The waves grew more appeased, till all . . .  
Was hushed, by silence, to repose.

“ My son ! ” quoth Kane,  
“ My brother ! ” Julian cried.

None marked the faint, unhallowed haze  
That hung about his half uncertain form ;  
Yet stared the dark thane, with a thumping heart  
Against his ribs :

“ From whence dost thou appear ? ”

The figure moved, and pointed to the sea ;  
And seeing how astonished gazed the guests,  
The baron strode across the hall, and with  
A show of ostentatious love,

Embraced his stranger son returned,  
Yet marvelled not his garments were not wet ;  
And, bowing to the ladies, and the lords  
Who now applauded loud and long, he led  
His new guest to the banquet spread, and sat  
Him at his right, beneath a candelabrum,  
Whose silver branches rose, and spread above  
The sparkling wine, like fire in the air,  
That gilds the cup and lights the maiden's breast.

“ Now welcome thrice, my son, I drink to thee,  
Be not abashed, gaze on thy father's face,  
Or is it all these searching damsels' eyes,  
Clear as the deep-blue ice, soft as the snow,  
Whose novel northern beauty dazzles thee,  
And strains thine unaccustomed southern sight ?  
Or art thou wearied out by battling with  
The rude storm-ridden wave ? Behold,  
If thou wilt be refreshed, there's not a lord  
Or knight that would not drink with thee.”  
Now, speechless, slowly turned the stranger's head,  
Erect—full-faced on him that spoke—

“It has no eyes ! Stand by !—It is a corpse !”

And with fixed, glassy glare and upright hair,  
The thane arose, but staggered blindly back  
Against the massive candelabrum  
That stood behind and 'lumined all ;  
It reeled a moment, and then fell  
All burning, like a crashing meteor ;  
Then darkness breathed around ;  
The oil ran, and dripped o'er in bright flame ;  
The very wine within the beakers blazed ;  
The baron stood and moaned, the silver shaft  
Had snapped his thigh ; the wild dames rushed  
and ran  
Half frantic through an open arch, that led  
But few cared where, if 't were but from the flame ;  
While stood the knights aghast.

The fire

'Bout their iron shoes they heeded not ;  
It was the sudden tocsin of the keep  
That trembled through the burning air  
Half smothered, yet distinctly there. Each looked

Upon the other's face, then cried : "To arms ! "  
And rushed to gain his post without ; all heard  
The clash of steel, the cry of "Jarl, Jarl ! "  
The coming on of men, the crash,  
The brief repulse, the cursing of the maimed.

The cullis had been blocked, 't was wedged  
Immovable between the outer walls ;  
The enemy stole up the low and creeping  
Passages, surprising each, o'erwhelming all ;  
Though some withstood, with an astonished look,  
Yet were cut down at last ; the rest,  
All hacked and worn, were driven  
To the wall, where bleeding Kane still fought  
Upon one knee, while Julian stood aside  
To ward the blows dealt at his sire's head.  
But Helgé 'd been despatched in some  
Dark gallery, that he had headlong sought  
To save himself when seeing all was lost.  
And still down closer to the wall  
They forced the desperate pair, who now  
Were left the last, yet stoutest of

Their ancient race.

At last Sir Julian reeled,  
Felled by a cruel mortal blow ;  
Then some rushed on, and, fiercely jesting, pricked  
Mad Kane with halberds, till he died ;  
While Julian, turning to his victors, cried :

“ If ye would grant a dying man his boon,  
Then lay me in the sand before the sea,  
That moans complaining to the shore,  
Where sleeps my brother evermore.”

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## MINOR POEMS



## TRUE POETRY.

'True poetry is not of earth,  
'T is more of Heaven by its birth :  
A mingled feeling keeps us tied  
Fast down to earth where we abide ;  
Close to the precipice of time  
We eager creep with ventured rhyme,  
There stunned and staggered to behol'd  
The wonders of great truths untold,  
And fearful lest we lose our hold,  
Or mute—dumb-founded at the sight—  
The Muse recedes, or checks her flight.

Truth—truth ! 't is all a poet's cry ;  
But earth comes in to give the lie ;  
E'en man's best nature is impure,  
And cannot too much light endure ;  
We 're happy still, content at least

With what crumbs fall from nature's feast ;  
"T is like a glass,—truth but reflects,  
Though darkly, through our intellects  
Clouded by care, or scarce aware  
What great things God would picture there.

## “AT THE TOMB OF GENEVIEVE.”

The midnight air creeps through the streets,  
There 's not a step, there 's not a sound,  
For Solitude staid Silence greets ;  
Still noiseless spirits move unbound,  
And walk as they had done of yore ;  
As vapors gathered on the shore,  
The passing winds their bosoms heave,  
Then kiss the tomb of Genevieve,

Saint Genevieve.

Now kneel I by the altar stone,  
'And breathe a prayer, yet not alone,  
For one beloved, now thither flown,  
Flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone ;  
Yes—but a saint—could this atone  
For me, for one perchance so prone ?

Are not all men beloved the same,  
When, at the end, there comes the call,  
And all are purged from sin and shame,  
Before the Lord, the God of all ?  
Then answer, phantoms, bending low,  
For ye have learned ; tell what ye know  
Before the dawn, when ye must leave  
These co'd gray stones of Geneva.

I tremble now, I know not why ;  
A still white hand is on me laid,  
The arches reel, the shadows fly,  
“ Boy, it is I, be not afraid.”  
And it was she in brightness clad ;  
I looked again, and I was glad  
I was at peace, I ceased to grieve,  
And blessed this tomb of Genevieve,

Then mourn not o'er a fleeting breath,  
The last long gasp, the silent bed,  
Or all the ministers of death—  
The ever-living are the dead !  
For lo ! she spoke to me a while,  
And kissed me soft, and seemed to smile,  
And bade me never more to grieve,  
For she now walked with Genevieve,

Saint Genevieve.

No longer mine, yet e'en more dear,  
More near, forever me to bless,  
No more imprisoned in her bier,  
Her winter and her summer dress.  
The flowers nestling on her tomb  
Must fade some day, and lose their bloom ;  
But she, ah, no ! I do believe,  
Can never fade, this Genevieve,

Saint Genevieve.

## ARTEMIS.

The goddess lights my sail ;  
And all the crested billows, spreading wide,  
Her face reflect, as pale  
As sunken Death's upon the swollen tide  
  
That lifts above the mast.  
While the huge black eddies of the frenzied sea,  
Enraged, rush roaring past  
The side, as the dripping cup is thrust to me :—  
  
“ Here's to Diana, one and all,  
Whose unslaked thirst now rocks the deepest  
flood ;  
Whose eyes, when crites fall  
And rapine is abroad, are shot with blood ! ”  
  
Ah ! in the storm thou'rt feared ;  
The shattered ships proclaim thy awful spell :

Though thy disk is wan and weird,  
Thou hast the power to make the sea a hell !

But from the strand thou 'rt chill,  
Forbidding, as a virgin's eye unwooed  
By mortal touch : yet still  
Thou 'rt fair, though passion in thee finds no food,

Save when thy silver beams  
In sleeping arbors play the lovers' amulet,  
And time those wakeful dreams  
That, having tasted once, we ne'er forgot.

A favor, then, pale moon !  
As now thou seek'st to shun the morning light,  
Grant me this parting boon,—  
To drink thy health before we say “Good-night !”

Then in the silent air,  
Shining o'er me alike as o'er my grave,  
“Here 's to thy silver hair !”  
I drink, and cast the goblet in the wave.

## FIRST LOVE.

Oh ! I love thee for thy beauty ;  
Oh ! I love thee for thy duty,  
Paid to him who comes to claim thee ;  
For this heart can never blame thee,  
Though it loves, it loves, it loves thee ;  
Though it loves, it loves, it loves thee.

Though I woo in awkward fashion,  
Though thou canst not feel my passion,  
Though thou sadly dost neglect me,  
Though full soon thou wilt forget me,  
Still I love, I love, I love thee ;  
Still I love, I love, I love thee.

Still the wild bees, still, are humming ;  
But the winter's frost is coming,  
And the hope that lies within me  
Faints and fades and dies within me ;  
For I love, I love, I love thee ;  
Oh ! I love, I love, I love thee !

## MY MOUNTAIN MAID.

### PART I.

The god-like mountains press the vale, and curve  
'Twixt man and all the welkin's fainter blue ;  
Here tender streamlets part the beetling rocks,  
Like angel spirits from the upper snows.  
And here below, where plays a tiny mill,  
Across the vale, half swallowed up in green,  
Here dwelt my mountain maid—  
Sweet child of nature, like the lilies pale  
That swing and bow their heads, when  
The wet paddles chop the stream, and shake  
The upper mill-boards with a measured tread.

Toil, toil, the sluggish wheel goes round  
To the bright-eyed maiden's song,  
And the birds in the trees sit hid in the leaves  
To list to her roundelay.

Why call her mountain maid,  
Since she dwells in the vale,  
In far less purer air than breathes  
The silent uplands now bereft  
Of her sweet face and holy songs,  
Wherewith from God she blest  
The dark entangled passes, far and wide,  
Cheering the startled stranger and his guide ?

But now no more is she the pupil  
Of the giant spirit crowning the chaste snows ,  
No more the playmate of the edelweiss and rose  
That hang upon the fringes of the depths :  
But wooed to earth, from the e'erlasting peaks,  
To drink her earnest nature's fondest hopes  
Out of a cup of mortal love.

'Tis strange—aye passing strange—yet true,  
She loved the miller who wooed her  
To be the sunshine of his tedious toil ;  
He, of a coarser nature than was hers,  
Seemed worked upon by her diviner self ;

She was the soul and he the body  
Of this most unequalled yoke ;  
Oft bowing to the vision, yet standing  
Half rebelled from what seemed hid from him,  
Because such power was not his  
Of soul, and shamed him to himself.  
He longed at last to be set free,  
For this had poisoned all, and love,  
As in more treach'rous beasts, the chance  
Of time had well-nigh turned to hate.

Toil, toil, the sluggish wheel goes round  
To the bright-eyed maiden's song,  
And the birds in the trees sit hid in the leaves  
To list to her roundelay.

## PART II.

But the mountains threatened soon ;  
And the eagle swept down from his nest on high,  
Flew wild from the alpine wall,  
And compassed the valley, and screamed

O'er the mill :—“ My Masters claim their own !”  
The clouds on the peaks were rent in twain,  
And many a glacier moved and groaned,  
The avalanche fell to the spurs below,  
And the battlements shook with thunder and hail,  
For lightnings had gathered to fall on the vale;  
And the mill it stood still,  
No water would flow.

Then the woman rushed out, all stricken and pale,  
And cried: “ I will come to my post  
On the hills, and dwell on your breasts  
By the life-giving rills, and care  
For the eaglets that cannot yet fly,  
And sleep in the hut the winds  
Have prepared : but let not—  
O let not my husband then die !”

The hills were appeased,  
The mountain was still,  
The streamlet flowed on and startled the mill,  
The cliff bared his brow and smiled on the plain,

The chamois returned to his mate on the rock,  
And the shepherd passed on with his comforted  
flock ;  
For the wife of the miller was singing again.

She sang to the valley, as she gazed oft below,  
Not marking the jealous eyes out of the snow,  
Nor the monster-mountain murmuring low ;  
She only heard the old kirk bell,  
The dear old bell she loved so well ;  
There was the mill, she saw the light,  
Her children were there, and it was night !  
Her tears fell fast, she turned again,  
She toiled up the slope, nor paused she more  
Till all of earth seemed lost below,  
And round her lay the chaplet white,  
The zone flung round in heaven's height  
The cloud-like snow the winds do blow ;  
And at the zenith stood a star  
That fuller grew—a wondrous star—  
As if the night was pierced afar,  
And angel light was shining through.

Then 'mid a stillness as at dawn  
Some voices said : "Two masters none can serve,  
The crown is thine, the diadem."  
She looked to the star, and saw it a gate  
That opened in to wonder and light,  
With angels coming robed in white ;  
And kneeling there, and bending low,  
She fell asleep in the arms of the snow,  
As died the sound of the old kirk bell,  
And vanished the mountain and all below.

## WHERE KATE WAS LOST.

From where you stand, can you not see up there  
    Above the rocks, where the bright snow seems  
        tossed  
'Neath that white cone, the smaller of the pair,  
    That stands this way, apart? There Kate was  
        lost.

The snow 's too deep to search, the guides all  
    say ;  
There was a storm up there a week ago ;  
We had gone up to try and break a way,  
    But had to leave when it began to blow.

It 's long and dreary waiting on for Spring,  
    The thaw is backward and the season's late,  
To gaze up there and not do any thing,  
    For days and days compelled to sit and wait.

I often take my glass and think I see  
A something cloud-like waving to and fro,  
A something vague,—but it can only be  
The wind that sweeps away the loosened snow.

When the barometer is high, I climb  
To watch the glacier as it creeps around,  
Draining the upper snows—they say, in time,  
That in the ice below she will be found.

If Spring should never come, I like to think  
That “ Kate is coming nearer, day by day ;”  
They said this that my spirits might not sink,  
Kind people that I’d met upon the way.

If Spring comes soon, they say I must not go,  
It’s only lately that they’ve talked like this ;  
Yet from my bedroom I can see the snow,  
And that’s a pleasure that I would not miss.



The leaves are out, and yet they make me wait ;  
When the time comes, I know I shall be  
strong.  
I asked to-day how soon I should see Kate ;  
The doctor said that now 't would not be long.

## INES ON LEAVING AMERICA.

With patience I 've waited the day  
For the cloud of my sadness to lift,  
The sun-god to show me his ray,  
Or the sail of distemper to shift.  
But the future doth ever belie  
What the present would tempt us pursue,  
And the hopes that I cherish so high  
To-morrow may vanish like dew.

Though firm be the rock of the past,  
Still rude are the bulwarks of time,  
And steep as the canvaséd mast  
Now seemeth the hill that I climb.  
The heavens can never decay,  
The shores of the sea cannot rust,  
But man who aspires in clay  
Must dwindle and crumble to dust.

The hour hath come to depart,  
And a chill is over the sea,  
A winter hath stricken my heart,  
And a tear hath froze in mine e'e.

The landsman is pricking his light,  
The sailor is furling his sail,  
As westward advances the night,  
And slowly increases the gale.

The shadows creep over the sand,  
And dim is the echoed salute ;  
The ocean now blends with the strand ;  
The breakers are distant and mute.  
Now darker and deeper the wave,  
And fainter, still fainter the shore—  
“ America ! land of the brave !  
Farewell ! I can see thee no more.

“ So vanish—save memory dear,  
Ye billows in sorrow may moan ! ”  
For my lesson through many a year  
Has been that I 'm best when alone ;

And roaming I may be so long,  
That returning at last to this shore,  
No one will remember my song,  
And my country shall know me no more !

PACQUEBOT ST. LAURENT.

*February 24, 1872.*

## “TAKE A HANSOM.”

### A ROUGH SKETCH.

London. Where dwell the under clouds,  
Where the barred sun, spasmodically repress'd,  
Would break his yellow bonds of smoke and fog.

Take a hansom, with a flying cob,  
Bob-bob, hob-nob, and bob.  
“Four-wheeler” sure to be unsound,  
And slower than “bus” or “underground.”

London. Where the green-wood park  
Shoots up its iron railings and its trees,  
To laugh at brick and dingy granite.

Take a hansom, with a flying cob,  
Bob-bob, hob-nob, and bob.  
Tell him to skirt the park around,  
Where quiet blends with restless sound.

Quiet, as should be the soul,  
While busy, earnest-seeking life  
Fast journeys to the light of lasting day.

Take a hansom, with a flying cob,  
Bob-bob, hob-nob, and bob.

Drive to the Abbey, where sleeps the saint,  
The actress here hath doffed her paint.

London, of restless life incarnate,  
For multitude compact, but one might seem,  
One vast arch-monster, murmuring through the  
night.

Take a hansom, with a flying cob,  
Bob-bob, hob-nob, and bob.  
A hurried glance, a fleeting face,  
All flashing past in peopled space.

London, pressing on the mind absorbed,  
Like some dull sense of worn-out days returned,  
In day-dream and by night, 't is endless, 't is sub-  
lime.

Take a hansom, with a flying cob,  
Bob-bob, hob-nob, and bob.  
A sixpence extra on the job,  
Bob-bob, hob-nob, and bob.

## “NOT YET SIXTEEN.”

### A LETTER.

“ Dear Husband Fred :

Come to your little wife ;

I ought to love you, and I do—

I did not mean to worry you ;

I won’t toss ball with Mary any more.

I quite agree with all you say :

‘ A married girl should never play.’

“ And Fred, I won’t regret that I ’ve left school ;

But only I do feel so old,

And all the girls say I ’m so cold

And stiff, because I wear a cap and train.

But married ladies must dress so,

As they ’re quite old enough to know.

“ The house seems—oh ! so big and still, dear Fred,

When you are gone. And when nurse too

Is cross, I don't know what to do !  
I can't skip rope ; it makes the servants laugh—  
I heard them whisper on the green :  
‘Poor Mis'ess ! She 's not yet sixteen.’

“ I'll let them see I know what I 'm about ;  
I 've made a nest up in a tree,  
Where there 's just room for you and me ;  
And when *those* children come, I 'll say I 'm out,  
I 'll show them what is married life !  
Won't that be right ?

“ Your little wife.”

## A FRAGMENT.

My fragile bark  
Was tossing on the waters blue,  
When on a sudden all the shore  
Was veiled from view,  
And heaven's hollow arch  
Was filled with flying mists,  
That trailed their smoky wings  
Upon the cold dark waves ;  
A dreadful pall swept o'er  
The heaving bosom of the main ;  
In huge round drops  
Great heaven's ointment fell  
Upon the swaying deck,  
While black, portentous thunder-clouds  
Commenced their ominous cannonade.  
My spirit failed me and I sang :

Whatever this may be,  
'T is e'en for the best ;

Though a shudder comes o'er me,  
My soul is at rest.

In the church-yard, alone,  
My child is now sleeping ;  
While the billows do moan,  
And the heavens are weeping.

Since men have forbidden—  
My darling, 't is better for thee,  
That the grave hath all hidden,  
And thy father should flee ;

Yet thy spirit is near,  
On the wings of the gale—  
Yes, darling, thou 'rt here,  
By my storm-beaten sail.

I hear thy voice calling ;  
'T is sweetly the same,  
O'er the tempest appalling,  
That's calling my name.

In fondness I follow,  
Though swift be thy flight,  
In the silence of sorrow  
And the darkness of night !

But with a sudden jar, I 'woke from out my rhapsody ;  
A shock, as if a pack of wild dragoons  
Had all at once assailed  
Our frail defenceless garrison.  
Then came a long distressing shriek,  
That struck a chord of terror in my breast ;  
And then a deadly calm upon the elements,  
Wherein I heard a song of prayer  
That seemed a fervid orison  
Unto some mighty god ;  
While by a dazzling flash  
That blindly crossed the firmament,  
I saw a struggling man  
Afar, upon the buoyant crest  
Of a receding wave.  
A human groan escaped my lips,

And with a wild and troubled eye,  
I gazed about the trembling bark :  
What means this stalwart seaman  
On his bended knees,  
With hands in meek contrition clasped,  
That scarce an hour since  
Had mocked fair fortune to the face,  
And called on niggard luck  
To grant the bark a safe and speedy course.  
How tyrant conscience doth abuse  
The broad advantage of his fears,—  
A few more minutes in the lease of life,  
Ere we are made poor outcasts  
Of this mortal state.  
Death is a hard philosopher,  
That scorns all argument. And  
The hour hath come when penitence,  
With trumpet voice, cries out upon my soul.  
I pray to that Almighty Being,  
The only lasting thing  
On earth, to our seeing  
It is permitted us to know,

The King of kings anointed :  
Have mercy at this hour,  
When the spirit of my faulty course  
Has fallen from his tower,  
Wherein he held his fort—sophistic force.  
I've never seen the monster Death—  
Some say he hath soft azure in his eye,  
And some, sweet perfume in his breath ;  
I know not if this be—then let me die !  
My mind is clouded and my sight is veiled,  
Yet still, methinks, my prayer was heard ;  
For on the distant crest of an advancing wave,  
Against a curtain of white spray,  
Sits silent Death in all his majesty.  
In his left hand he holds an hour-glass,  
And in his right the fatal scythe,  
Whose polished blade doth gleam  
Like some false beacon at each flash  
Of the electric train.  
Now, like the victim of a serpent king,  
I stand, as if enchanted—locked by a chain  
That binds me in an awful spell ;

The dreadful wave increases,  
And still I stand with chattering teeth and pulses  
    cold,  
My being centred in mine eyes—  
He comes ! He comes !  
The monster Death, he comes !  
And I am swept afar along the whirling eddies  
    and  
The all-conflicting torrent of the boiling flood.  
How cold, how bitter, bitter cold  
Those black waves were that gurgled in mine ears  
And lashed against my face !  
O help ! I sink ! Down—down !  
Great Heaven give me air !  
I feel a thousand thumbs  
Upon my windpipe pressed—  
A desperate struggle and I rise.  
How blessed it is to breathe the air again !  
But ah ! I scarce can feel, my limbs  
Are torpid, and my blood runs cold—  
Down ! down !  
A second and a third time, down !

And then a calm delicious dream ·  
It seemed that once again  
I walked beneath the ancient elms  
That 'dorned the college grounds  
Where I had talked : a sickly verse  
Of blank philosophy.

And then, methought, again  
Close to my breast I held my child,  
While crossing o'er an angry tide ;  
And then I passed to sunny Italy,  
Where all was drunk with joy ;  
My child was safe and I was free !  
Then came a sweet contented sleep,  
From which my spirit only 'woke,  
To rise from out the ashes of my flesh,  
And seek its final resting-place.















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